

[No. 6441.—MARCH 15, 1884.]

THE tug-boat *Fulle* returned to Shanghai on the 10th March with the treasure that was lost by the wreck of the *Hwai-yuen*. It was recovered by Mr. Wilson, the diver, who narrowly escaped with his life in a previous attempt to get at it.—*Shanghai Courier*.

CAPTAIN A. P. McEuen, R.N., the new Superintendent of Police, assumed charge of the Force at Shanghai on the 8th. Both he and Mr. Penfold paraded the men in the afternoon and spoke to them on the subject of their duties. The new Superintendent, we understand, explained that while he would do all he could to help them, at the same time he would not overlook breaches of discipline. —N. C. D. News.

In 1893, 6,421 patents were taken out, whereas in the first four weeks after the law commenced to operate, there were 2,288; or nearly 39,000 per annum, a number in excess even of the average in America, where so much encouragement is afforded to patentees. The Controller of Patents says the inventions are at least as valuable as before. Of course, this number will not be kept up, as there was a rush of patents kept down by the old Act, but clearly invention has been stimulated.

appear to have a very exalted opinion of the Viceroy Tao's powers as a warrior. A native gentleman while in conversation with some foreigners on the subject of Tao's reputation as a soldier, spoke of him in terms something like the following:—
"What! Call Tao a great warrior? Why he made use of foreign guns by the most renowned makers, and he went to places where the people had nothing but clubs with which to fight him. With his superior weapons, he exterminated men; anybody could do that. It is a pity the foreign drilled soldiers (Volunteers) in the Settlement were not called out to drive him out."

From *Kowching and Chungking*, the first
vessels to return out of a fleet of six vessels,
which left Shanghai on the morning of the
18th February, for Tientsin, have arriv-
ed at Shanghai. The *Kowching*, the first
boat to Tientsin and the *Chungking*, the
second, left that port, the former at
10.30 a.m. and the latter at noon on the
17th inst. They were then in port the
Yachang, *Hacoo*, *San Dorado*, *Waverley*, and
Puataha. Coming down the Poohe, the
two steamers met the *Kunagai* steamer near
the lower Ning Kwa. The

aku Bar at 7 p.m., and passed the Pang-
twe bound up. The *Koehsing* passed
Shanghaiwan at 4 p.m. on the 5th, and was
followed by the *Chungking* at 8.30 p.m.
The *Koehsing* got alongside the *Associated*
Pharves at 8.30 p.m., having made the run
from Tientsin in 67 hours and 10 minutes,
or from Taku in 49 hours and a-half. The
Chungking arrived at 2 a.m. on the 6th,
having made the run from Tientsin in 62
hours, or from Taku in 55 hours, or 11 hours
less than she took from Shanghai to Taku
on her way up.—N.-C.D. News.

Mr Chamberlain, in treating of the Tories
that because Ireland is, in their opin-
ion, unfit for any extension of the franchise,
England and Scotland should wait till Ire-
land recovers herself, and their plan re-
minded him of Sheridan's kind offer to a
woman, after an evening's carouse,
found lying on the pavement street, but
not so incapable but what he had to ask
himself to help him on to his legs. "No,"
said Sheridan, "I cannot do that for you,
because it is the first thing I will do, to show
my friendship for the friends I lie down be-
neath." Mr. Chamberlain did not say
the Fourth Party rather well, remarking on
Arthur Balfour's assurance to the
Liberators that the Session would
begin in a storm, continue in a storm, and
end in a storm. Mr. Balfour, one of
those prophets who can do a great deal to
secure the accomplishment of his own pre-
dictions. Gentlemen, I can imagine the
Fourth Party on the one side, and the
Liberators on the other, each with his
witches in *Macbeth*, shaking the clouds
with fingers, and saying one to another, "Till

thee a wind, and I myself have all other; and then, referring to Mr. Bradstone, they will go on to say, 'Though bark can not be lost, yet it shall be pest-torssed.'

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Captain of the Dutch steamer *Pateoh*,
t. Vanweert, which left Singapore a
rt time ago for Palembang, reports that

gained up the Palembang river the ship sustained a severe shock by striking against something, the nature of which was, at the time, unknown. The engines were immediately stopped; and, on sounding, in fact, of water was found. It was discovered that there was a large leak forepart of the vessel, that the water coming in rapidly, and that the vessel was filling and sinking so fast that it was evident that it was impossible to save her long as she remained in the water, even the full power of the pumps brought into action. In account of her being water so rapidly was decided by the Captain to run her high up the river bank; this was accordingly attempted; the intention being, whatever pecuniary might be incurred, "to save the ship if possible, and the lives of those on board."—As soon as he had thus grounded the vessel, sent down to ascertain the cause of leakage; and they reported a large leak in the middle compartment of the vessel just below highwater mark. A "dredge" was erected against this as soon as the position could be ascertained, the gap being composed of bags, lumber, whatever was available. The presence of the dredge and the common-sense of Captain Hunter undoubtedly saved the vessel, and her owners could not be grateful to her or averting what might have proved a calamity or a total loss. When the vessel was docked at Singapore it was found she hole in her stern was large enough to admit the passage of a man. It was believed to have been caused by striking on *Secrets Times.*

turns on the hygiene of the voice even this week at the School of Dramatics by Dr. Morell Mackenzie. There is a large audience, among whom were Mrs. Bancroft, Miss Mary Anderson, Mrs. Kendal, Mr. Toole, Mr. Hervey, Lord Vernon, Mr. Woodborough, and others, all professionally or artistically interested in the voice. Dr. Mackenzie insisted on voice culture being commenced at an early age, and continued throughout the "creaking" period. He laid stress on proper clothing as regards the voice, especially condemning the tight stays as hindering the free action of the vocalizing apparatus. Moderate alcohol and tobacco was enjoined.

HONGKONG AMATEUR ATHLETIC SOCIETY.

Saturday, March 15.

Favoured with fine weather, and admirably arranged, these sports, which took place this afternoon on the Cricket Ground, were carried through most successfully. For the convenience of the ladies, a marquee had been erected on the ground, and was filled to overflowing with the fair members of the community, children, babies and animals. His Excellency, the Governor and Lady Bowen, the Misses Bowen and most of the leading residents were present. The events came off with commendable promptitude, the long and tiresome intervals between the various races and other competitions being avoided. Half the enjoyment of the race meeting here is spoilt by the prolonged intervals which occur between the events. This afternoon, no sooner was one event over than the bell was rung for the next, the result being that the sports were thoroughly enjoyed, and relieved from tedium of any kind.

The two most interesting events of the afternoon were the Veterans' Race and the Tug of War. In the Veterans' Race, residents who are supposed to be past their racing days came out to compete for Mr. G. F. Chatter's cup. Mr. W. Morgan, having a start of nearly half the distance to be run, was rather the favourite when the positions were taken. Our veteran sports, who carried a stick in the race, presumably to prop himself up with, were anxious to be off, and had a preliminary canter all to himself before getting into the race. When the start was given, he was not slow. When it came, Mr. Morgan flung his legs about in a wonderful way in his endeavours to keep to the front. But the gallant old fellow struggled in vain, for the cup fell to Mr. T. A. Le Mesurier, who exhibited unexpected activity in the legs. The trial-heat of the international tug of war fell to the Scotch team. The English and Irish first tried conclusions, the Irish being the victors—a not very creditable circumstance to the Englishmen of the Colony, seeing the small number of Irish residents from whom the members of a team could be picked. But the English team had apparently received little or no training for the work; they pulled anything but steadily or together, the result being that, a second or two after the struggle commenced, only about half of them would be pulling at one time, the others having come to the ground. After the Irish victory the Scotch and German teams pulled each other. It was a better contest than the previous one, but the Scotch finally pulled their opponents over the line. In the final struggle the Scotch were victorious.

The Band of the Buffs, under Bandmaster H. Quinn, discovered a very pleasant selection of music during the afternoon.

Committee:—Major Ward, R.E.; Major Howarth, The Buffs; Lieut. Bonbury, The Buffs; Lieut. R. E. F. Foss, Esq.; H. J. H. Tripp, Esq.; H. E. Wodehouse, Esq.; H. S. Lockhart, Esq.; B. O. Hodder, R.N.; J. Bell-Irving, Esq.; O. Vincent Smith, Esq.; F. A. Hazeland, Esq.; M. G. Oates, Esq.; K. Leigh, Esq.; Dr. Pike, A.M.D.; and A. Denison, Esq.

Honorary Secretary:—R. Maclean, Esq. **Starter:**—H. Foss, Esq., and Lieut. Dr. Pike, R.E.

Clerk of the Course:—H. J. H. Tripp, Esq. **Official Time Keeper:**—J. Bell-Irving, Esq.

Judges:—R. C. Hodder, R.N., and R. K. Leigh, Esq. **Referee:**—Major Ward, R.E.

1.—100 YARDS FLAT RACE. **TRIAL HEATS.**—First three in each heat to run in the final.

F. A. Hazeland, H. St. D. Jarrett, C. E. Howarth, and R. C. Guinness, ran in the first heat. Howarth came in first easily in 11 seconds. Jarrett and Hazeland were second and third respectively. A. H. Jackson raced in first in the second heat with consummate ease, in 11 seconds. The other runners in this heat were G. A. Caldwell (second), H. E. Angier (third), H. Sampson, and J. Lank.

2.—PORTING THE SHOT.—(No follow-on, hand, 7-foot run, 16-lbs. shot.) Winners at previous meetings to be penalised 1 foot. Prize presented by the Club Germania.

H. G. Rice, A. Denison, and A. H. Jackson were the only competitors. Jackson, the winner last year, beat his rivals with extreme ease. His first throw measured 33 feet, 9 inches. Rice's best was only 26 feet. Jackson's throw this year was two feet better than his throw last year.

A. H. Jackson 1
H. G. Rice 2

3.—LONG JUMP.—Winners at previous meetings to be penalised 6 inches. Prize presented by J. T. Chatter, Esq.

W. Watson Pike and Lieut. Jarrett, the winner last year, were the sole competitors. After some splendid jumping, Pike won without the aid of the penalty of 6 inches which he was entitled to receive from Jarrett. Pike 20 feet, Jarrett 19 feet, 84 inches. Pike's jump is the best that has yet been made in the Colony.

W. Watson Pike 1
H. St. D. Jarrett 2

4.—120 YARDS HURDLE RACE.—Winners at previous meetings to be penalised 5 yards for each win. Prize presented by the Hon. F. D. Sassoon.

This race was also run in heats, the entries being rather numerous to run in one lot. C. S. Barff, F. Grimble, Lieut. Jarrett, G. A. Caldwell and C. E. Howarth, competed in the first heat, which fell to Barff first, Grimble second and Jarrett and Caldwell in dead heat for third place. E. J. Chapman and H. E. Angier came in second and third respectively, ahead of Lieut. Plimbe and Sordall, in the second heat.

In the final heat, Chapman, Barff and Grimble raced together the greater part of the distance. When near home, Chapman, whose style of jumping is exceedingly graceful, asserted himself and won the race by two lengths. Barff was second and Jarrett third. Grimble fell when near home. Jarrett, last year's winner, was penalised ten yards.

E. J. Chapman 1
C. S. Barff 2
Lieut. Jarrett 3

6.—THROWING THE CRICKET BALL.—Winners at previous meetings to be penalised 5 yards. Prize presented by the Hongkong Cricket Club.

F. H. O. Wilson, C. S. Barff, A. H. Jackson (penalised five yards), and J. C. O. Hendry completed. Barff's first throw was never equalled by the others, who had three tries to beat it. Barff afterwards threw twice, and won the ball 100 yards. Jackson's throw last year was 98 yards. Jackson threw 100 yards, 2 feet, Henry 99 yards, and Wilson 95 yards.

C. S. Barff 1
J. C. O. Hendry 2

6.—VAULTING HORSE.—Prize presented by the Club Germania.

This proved a most interesting and stiff contest. The gentlemen who competed were Messrs F. W. Koch, J. Lank, G. R. Lammert and J. G. Scholzer. The contest was won by Lammert, the longest and most like of the competitors.

G. R. Lammert 1

7.—100 YARDS FLAT RACE.—Final heat. Prize presented by the Honourable F. B. Johnson.

The runners in the final heat were Jackson, Howarth, Angier and Hazeland. Jackson easily defeated his rivals, whom he could have left a long way in the rear if he had chosen to do so. Time, 10½ seconds. Howarth was second, Angier was third and Hazeland a good fourth.

A. H. Jackson 1
A. E. Howarth 2
H. E. Angier 3

8.—SOLDIERS' HALF MILE RACE.—Open to all non-commissioned officers and men of the Garrison and Navy. Post cities. Prizes presented by H. J. H. Tripp, Esq. 1st prize, \$25; 2nd prize, \$10; 3rd prize, \$5.

About a dozen Corporals and Privates from the various military departments competed for the prizes in this event, the greater number of competitors coming from the Buffs. Gunner Whitty, who ran in very good style, led all the way, coming in first easily in 2 min. 23½ sec.

Gunner Whitty 1
Corporal Kenolly 2
Dr. M. Tapp 3

9.—QUARTER MILE FLAT RACE.—Winner at one previous meeting penalised 10 yards; at more than one, 15 yards. Prize presented by His Excellency the Governor; 2nd prize presented by the Committee.

The starters were C. E. Howarth, W. Watson Pike and A. H. Jackson. Jackson was the greatest favourite, but Pike was also in high favour with many. Pike made the running, closely followed by Jackson. Howarth saw he was out of the race before one hundred yards of the distance had been covered, and stopped running. Pike and Jackson continued the race at a furious pace, the former leading by about two yards and Jackson making great efforts to overtake him. This he did when half the distance had been covered, and a beautiful race ensued for the next 100 yards. Jackson was unable to obtain the advantage and stopped completely, 100 yards from home, and walked the rest of the distance. Pike won, but he nevertheless covered the distance in very good time viz., 56½ sec.

W. Watson Pike 1
A. H. Jackson 2

10.—INTERNATIONAL TUG OF WAR.—Trial Heats. Byes must pull off with Scotch Team.

Four teams, representing Germany, England, Scotland and Ireland respectively, came forward to do battle for their countries. It was decided that the Englishmen and Irishmen should pull first, and that the Germans should afterwards pull the Scotchmen.

The English team was composed of Messrs A. H. Jackson, T. R. Fisher, S. Hughes, Bowles, Harvey, R. K. Leigh, Dr. Cottell and Brockes.

The Irish team were Messrs R. C. Hodder, R. C. Guinness, Thompson, Kepple, Wade, King-Harman, Keo, Casanovi, and H. G. Rice.

The Irish team looked the stronger one of the two, both as regards weight and muscle, and as was soon proved after the first 50 yards was given. A very feeble resistance was offered by the Englishmen to the sons of Erin, who won the struggle without much ado in 44 seconds. Mr. Tripp coached the English team, and Dr. Pike performed a similar duty for the Irish team.

The Germans and Scotch then tried each other's mettle. It was known that the German team had been training hard for the event, and as its members were mostly big powerful men, it was thought the Scotch would be defeated. The Scotch team, however, won the race, and the Germans a brief struggle they pulled the rope the necessary distance over the line. Time 38 seconds.

The Scotch team were Major Cochrane (who was at the end of the rope), Messrs J. Robertson, J. Andrew, G. Stewart, W. Ross, Inspector J. Lindsay, E. Burns, and J. H. Stewart-Lockhart.

The German team was composed of Messrs W. Schmidt, H. Müller, G. Kuit, C. Brockeson, H. Boger, R. Schultz, F. Schwarzkopf, and E. Berman. Mr. J. H. Smith, coach.

11.—VETERANS' FLAT RACE, 120 YARDS. (HANDICAP).—Open to all 55 years old and upwards. 1st prize presented by C. F. Chatter, Esq. 2nd prize presented by the Committee.

The starters and handicapping were as follows:—R. C. Hodder, scratch, Major Howarth, 6 yards; H. E. Wodehouse, 10 yards; Major Cochrane, 12 yards; T. Holmes, 15 yards; T. A. Le Mesurier, A.C.G., 20 yards; W. Legge, 25 yards; W. Morgan, 30 yards. Le Mesurier won as easy as possible in 18 seconds. Legge was a good second. Mr. Morgan came in last.

12.—300 YARDS FLAT RACE, (HANDICAP).—Prize presented by Hon. T. Jackson.

The competitors were:—G. A. Caldwell and H. E. Angier, five yards from scratch; R. C. Guinness, C. E. Howarth and H. Sampson, ten yards; F. A. Hazeland twelve yards; A. Denison fifteen yards; and A. Machado, twenty yards. Denison won by two or three yards. Howarth fell and upset the field and afterwards claimed

that Denison had fouled him. Caldwell came in second. Time 34½ sec.

A. Denison 1
G. A. Caldwell 2

13.—HURDLE JUMP.—Winners at previous meetings to be penalised 2 inches for first win, and one inch additional for each successive win. Prize presented by H. N. A. Y. Esq.

C. S. Barff and Lieut. St. D. Jarrett, who were penalised three inches, competed. Both men jumped 5 feet, 3 inches. Jarrett was unable to beat this and Barff was declared winner.

C. S. Barff 1
Lieut. H. St. D. Jarrett 2

14.—ONE MILE FLAT RACE.—Winner of 1st prize at one meeting to be penalised 100 yards, at two meetings to be penalised 150 yards. Prize.—Garrison Cup. 1st and 2nd prizes.

W. Watson Pike, H. T. Arckoll, C. H. Lammert and H. O. Evers and J. Shanks, were the starters. Pike, after running well in hand close to his opponents, shook them off easily towards the end of the race, and won in 5 min. 19½ sec. Evers was second, and Shanks third.

W. Watson Pike 1
H. O. Evers 2

15.—BOYS' FLAT RACE, 200 YARDS (HANDICAP).—For Boys under 15, open to European Schools, 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes presented.

K. Arthur, who handicapped all the other starters, who numbered about thirty and were of all ages between 14 and 6, and of all sizes, took first prize. He ran well. A Costa was second, and J. Braga and L. Rose tied for third prize.

16.—CONSOLATION, 120 YARDS FLAT RACE.—Open to all competitors who have not won a prize. Post Cities. Prize presented by the Committee.

G. A. Caldwell, C. E. Howarth, F. A. Hazeland, H. E. Angier and A. Machado ran for the consolation prize. Caldwell came in first, Howarth second and Hazeland third, with Angier closed up in fourth place. Time 33½ sec.

G. A. Caldwell 1
C. E. Howarth 2
F. A. Hazeland 3

17.—OBSTACLE RACE, TWICE ROUND.—Entries up to the time of starting. Prize presented.

The obstacle race was won very pluckily by G. Grimble. Lieut. Sordall was second. The other competitors were Messrs R. C. Guinness, H. Sampson, A. Denison, H. E. Angier, and E. J. Chapman.

18.—INTERNATIONAL TUG OF WAR.—Eight men a side. Nationally to be decided by that of the father. To be pulled over 15 feet. No spikes or nails allowed. No holes to be dug on the ground before starting. Prize, Ladies' Purse.

The final tug for victory between the Scotch and Irish proved a determined and desperate struggle. The Irish pulled vigorously at the start, and managed slowly and with difficulty to drag the Scots a few feet towards them. The Scotch then lay well back, and the rope was kept stationary for about half a minute. The long strain found out the weak spot in the Irish team, which gradually gave, and the ground it had gained was finally lost. The struggle lasted for 1 min. 40½ sec.

Immediately after the final heat, Miss Bowen presented the prize to the successful team, whom she complimented in becoming terms. Mr. Lockhart returned thanks for the team, and said his team was still too short to permit him to reply as suitably as he would have liked.

The prizes were presented by Lady Bowen.

THE FRENCH MILITARY OPERATIONS IN TONKIN.

VISIT TO HAIDUONG; INTERVIEW WITH GENERAL NEGRIER; ADVANCED POST NEAR BACHNINH; SKIRMISH WITH THE CHINESE; BACHNINH.

(From our Special Correspondent.)

Haiphong, March 1st.

As I have only a few hours in Haiphong before returning to the French advanced post, about ten miles from Bac Ninh, I am only able to present to you a few rough notes of what I have seen on my trip round since leaving Hanoi on the 25th Feb.

We steamed thence to Haiduong, from which place, after interviewing General Negrier and obtaining all the information which was to be got at the time, we made a flying visit to Haiphong and returned to Haiduong again on the 28th.

Haiduong is just now one of the most important stations of the French troops in Tonkin, as it is there that is being mobilised the second brigade of the force which is to concentrate on Bac Ninh, under the command of General Negrier, and as the object of this column is, if possible, to cut off the retreat of the Chinese from that place, by getting between the stronghold and the road to Langson, it is expected that the heat of the fighting will fall upon it, and hence it is that General Negrier, whose reputation is pre-eminently that of a fighting man, has been selected for this difficult task.

Haiduong, which is the capital of the province of that name, has evidently been one of the wealthiest cities of the Delta. Besides its political importance it is situated in one of the richest agricultural districts in the Delta, of which it was recently the commercial centre, and a large trade was carried on in rice, drugs, silk and cotton goods, principally by Chinese merchants, a large number of whom were established in the town until a recent date. Now, however, the city presents a scene of dreary desolation; streets and roads which were formerly lined with fine brick houses, of two or three storeys, are now reduced to heaps of brick and stone, with a few bare

and detached walls only remaining to show where well built stores and dwellings once stood. This wholesale destruction was effected by the hordes of Chinese and Annamites who sacked and burnt the town on the 17th November last, when the small French garrison, then in the citadel, would have been annihilated but for the timely arrival of the gunboat *Leopard*.

The citadel, where the troops are now quartered, is of large dimensions, rectangular in form and, as usual, surrounded with strong walls and a moat. I was shown the wing or corner which was held by about forty French soldiers, against tremendous odds, for a day and a night in the affair of November. Capital roads have now been made about the place by the military authorities, the debris of brick and stone scattered plentifully around being used. There is in the town a fine church or cathedral, built by the Spanish mission about four years since, and this building, together with the neighbouring premises inhabited by the priests and some of their proteges, appear to have been saved from the almost universal destruction of property in the city.

We were accorded an interview with General Negrier immediately on our arrival. The General is a very intelligent and soldierlike looking man of about forty-two years of age. He bears a reputation for restless activity and wonderful powers for work, and though the youngest general officer in the French army, he has already won the confidence of both his superior officers and the men under his command. He has already gained distinction by his vigorous and decisive action during a serious crisis of affairs in the French colonies in North Africa, and is almost certain to come to the front if given an opportunity.

The General is almost an Englishman in his love for field sports, which has been acquired by him, during several visits across the Channel, at country houses in the old country. Referring to the mission now entrusted to him, a French officer aptly described him as "the right man in the right place," an encomium which could scarcely have been passed on some of the former chiefs of the Tonquin expedition.

The General's reception of *The Times* Correspondent and myself was business-like and to the purpose. In reply to our application for permission to follow the operation of the column under his command, he said that we had his full consent to go where we desired and see all that was to be seen, but that he could not offer us either transport, provisions or protection. This was at least candid, and certainly as much as we could expect, and was quite refreshing after the timid equivocations which had before been offered in response to applications to accompany the troops to the front.

The General's manner also led one to believe that, in granting his permission, though naturally unwilling to take any responsibility for our safety, he was not at all averse to our presence and would probably extend to us a better welcome than his words intimated. He advised us to apply to the Civil Resident at Haiduong, M. Roche, for a written permit or passport so that he himself would countersign. This we obtained on our second visit to Haiduong.

We had a long conversation with the General's Aide-de-camp, Captain de Portoul, a smart officer and most agreeable conversationalist, who adds to his professional acquirements a remarkably good knowledge of the English language. He referred in a very friendly way to the traditions of the English press on French enterprise in the Far East, which he believed, in company with most of his countrymen, were to a great extent to be ascribed to national pique or jealousy.

This opinion we, of course, could scarcely endorse and endeavoured to show him that the adverse criticisms of the press were due more to the manner in which the expedition had hitherto been conducted than to the policy of French colonization. We afterwards paid a visit to the *parais* in charge of the Spanish Catholic Mission at Haiduong, a gentleman of refined and intellectual appearance, and probably the best informed European in Tonkin as to the numbers and disposition of the garrison of Bac Ninh. He was until quite recently within a mile or two of the fortress, stationed at a village called Rai-chai, but he was obliged to leave his station owing to the unsettled state of the country. We had some difficulty in conversing, as the *père* spoke French only a little, and we were not up to Spanish or Tonquinese, but we gathered from his remarks that the reported number of Chinese in Bac Ninh, viz. thirty thousand, was not an exaggeration, as they had been arriving there in large numbers for some months past. He also told us that the direct road from Haiduong to Bac Ninh, which was formerly one of the best in the country, has been allowed to get into a very bad condition for want of repair and was consequently almost impassable for European troops.

Troops have been pouring into Haiduong during the last week or two as fast as the transport service would allow, and on the 29th, the date of our departure, there were probably fully four thousand French troops quartered there. Besides this, we found that a force of nearly one thousand men, consisting of a battalion of the Foreign Legion, a detachment of Annamite railleurs and a battery of four-pounders, had already advanced up the Song-cau towards Bac Ninh, and were established in a strong position about three miles above the embouchure of the *Canal des Rapides* or Bac Ninh Canal. General Negrier had re-

cently been up to inspect this advanced post.

This was important information and was at once decided to work our way up the river to this place, if possible. We started on the morning of the 29th and found French posts established at short distances for some two miles from Haiduong, with the gunboat *Leopard* anchored between them.

About half way between Haiduong and the junction of the *Canal des Rapides*, a little removed from the banks of the Thai-binh, is the Spanish mission station of Kemot, one of the most important Christian centres in the province, and shortly after passing that we found abundant signs that we were approaching the enemy's advanced posts.

Scattered about all over the country to the east of the river we described bands of Annamites armed with spears and carrying flags of many colours. These men were either pirates filibustering on their own account or scouts thrown out by the Chinese to collect information and provisions. Upon catching sight of our launch, numbers of them made off as fast as their legs would carry them to some point further inland from the river bank. As we advanced, traces of the depredations committed by these guerrilla bands became more and more evident. The villages were in flames all over the country on the eastern side of the river, and crowds of the unfortunate inhabitants who had escaped with their lives, and in some instances with a few of their household chattels, were collected on the bank imploring assistance and protection. At some points a few sampans were busily employed transporting the burnt-out refugees to the western side of the stream, which appeared for the time to be free from the work of havoc being carried on to the east. Everywhere, as we proceeded, it became clearer that we were advancing into the enemy's country, and grave fears were entertained by the captain of our launch, one of Dupuis' old employees, that our return to Haiduong or Hanoi would be cut off by the bands of guerrilla scattered all around. We determined, however, to force our way up to the advanced post of the Haiduong division, and as we had with us, on board, a French pilot who had a few days before taken up the gunboat *Leopard* to the position occupied by the troops, we were the better able to carry out our intention with safety.

After passing the mouth of the *Canal des Rapides* the river divides, for a short distance, into two branches, leaving an island of low elevation between the two arms, the deeper channel being the one to the east. This place is known by the name of *Les quatre bras*. The mountains, which extend in a long range in this direction, here approach close to the course of the river, and as we proceeded up we saw large numbers of Chinese troops crossing the hills in different directions. After ascending about three miles above the *Canal des Rapides* we arrived at the post occupied by the French advanced guard, where we landed and thoroughly inspected the defences. A flat-topped hill or mound, of about two hundred feet in height, situated close by the river on the Bac Ninh side, here offers a most advantageous position for defence and observation of the surrounding country; while directly opposite, on the other bank of the river, another hill, of rather lower elevation, is also occupied by French soldiers. We were most cordially received by an officer of the Foreign Legion, who introduced us to the colonel commanding the post and afterwards conducted us round the defences and quarters. Naturally a strong position, a little labour in digging trenches and throwing up low earthworks on the summit of the hill has made the "Seven Pagodes" almost impregnable against a Chinese force. A battery of light guns has been got into position so as to cover any attack on either side, while the men are quartered in huts and tents protected by the lower slopes of the hill. We heard that several desultory attacks had been made on the position by Chinese troops occupying the hills on the opposite side of the river, and we arrived there just in time to witness one of these skirmishes.

On the ridge of a hill on the north eastern side the Chinese had planted a long line of large flags, most of which appeared to be black with white borders, some black with white letters in the centre, probably the names or numbers of the regiments or companies, while the central banner was bright red. The men advanced in some cases over the ridges of the hill far beyond the flags and appeared to be directing their attack principally against an Annamite village at the foot of the nearest hill. The gunboat *Leopard*, which had previously been anchored directly opposite the French post, got up steam and proceeded a short distance up river into a position from which a better view could be obtained of the Chinese force, and then opened fire upon them with her Hotchkiss guns from the mast-heads, and an occasional shell from her guns. The Chinese, who appeared to have no artillery with them, returned the fire with small arms, and in spite of the cannonading kept up by the *Leopard*, succeeded in descending the hillside, and setting fire to the village, the inhabitants of which had meanwhile escaped and sought protection at the foot of the hill on that side of the river occupied by the French. Just as we were leaving a detachment of Annamite tirailleurs were despatched in the direction of the village to dislodge the enemy and reconnoitre. As far as could be made out at the distance, the Chinese appeared to be regular troops, and wore a blue and red

uniform. A night attack had been made on the post a short time before our visit, when one man was found dead the next day, while several more were believed to have been killed or wounded, but were carried off by their comrades. We were informed by one of the French officers, that there was no doubt that these men were regular Chinese troops. They are armed with Remington, Manger and Martini-Henry rifles. As usual with Chinese soldiers they carry a large number of flags in proportion to the men. All these flags appeared to be square in form, while the real Black Flag banners are of a triangular shape.

A short distance above the Seven Pagodes, the channel of the Song-cau has been barricaded with stones by the Chinese, and any progress further up the stream is at present impracticable. Divers, however, are being obtained in Haiphong for the purpose of removing the obstructions, if possible, and if these fail, it is probable that an attempt will be made to clear the passage by means of torpedoes.

We left the post at Seven Pagodes shortly after noon on the 29th, intending to return to Haiphong by the northern branch of the river called the Song King Thai, which runs through the mountains of the province of Quang-yun. Our captain was not at all enthusiastic in the enterprise, prophesying all sorts of horrible dangers, and some Annamites who came alongside our launch told us that intelligence of our passage up had been spread around, and that we should assuredly be fired upon by the bands of guerrilla, who were scouring the country between the advanced post and the French lines. We were, however, well armed, with Winchester and other weapons, which we got ready for action, and proceeded on our way. We saw more burning villages and groups of badly armed banditti, but passed unscathed through the disturbed part of the country. The fords at the junction of the Song King Thai and Thai-binh, which had been the *bell noli* of our worthy skipper, were dismantled and deserted, as were also some other fortifications on the banks of the former stream below the town of Phu-nam-sach. After entering upon the waters of this northern river, the whole aspect of the country changes and presents for many miles of its course a perfect panorama of the most varied and picturesque scenery it is possible to imagine. Mountain, river, wood and plain combine in producing one of the loveliest scenes probably to be met with in the Far East. The endless plains of rice, interspersed with the palm, surround villages, have vanished entirely. The river winds between hills of every variety of contour and elevation, some clothed with timber and others in which the limestone rocks out at the summit in all kinds of fantastic forms. At some points the waters of the stream wash the base of the rocky mass, while a little further a small but verdant plain lies between the river banks and the hills, at the foot of which nestle some picturesque little hamlets. We were much tempted to stay and explore some of these charming spots, but could not spare the time. I hope, however, on some future occasion, to give you some further particulars of this interesting part of the country.

The immense advantage gained by being possessed of means of locomotion independent of the Government launches, &c., has been amply demonstrated in our recent trip to the Seven Pagodes. Not only was the fact of the French forces being in possession of so advanced a position unknown to any correspondents of the press, but the French officers themselves both at Hanoi and Haiphong appear to be quite uninformed of the movement, and even had we been aware of it, it was quite impossible to have obtained any passage, beyond Haiduong, from the administration, and even the latter journey would then have been attended with most vexatious difficulties and delays.

As I believe I mentioned in a former letter, the actual attack on Bac Ninh will probably be made between the 8th and 11th inst., though it is likely that an advance of a portion, if not the whole of General Negrier's brigade, will occur before then. As far as I have been able to discover the severest fighting will fall to the lot of the Haiduong column, to which has been given the difficult task of cutting off the way of retreat for the Chinese forces by the northern road leading to Langson, which is the chief highway to the frontier. With this object in view the troops at Haiduong will probably be transported by the gunboats and launches to a point up the river Song-cau as near as can be got to Bac Ninh, where they will disembark and march on along the course of the river, taking as they proceed the various fortified villages and posts on the way. There are at least ten of these positions occupied by the Chinese between the *Canal des Rapides* and the point at which the Langson road crosses the Song-cau, and as the road by the river course is merely a narrow embankment, slightly raised above the surrounding paddy fields and swamps, progress must of necessity be both dangerous and slow. After reaching the Langson road, General Negrier will probably close in on Bac Ninh with his division, and then, if the garrison has not already evacuated the town, the real tug-of-war will commence, as if their retreat be once cut off the Chinese troops will probably fight to the death.

The second brigade, commanded by General Negrier, comprises the 1st and 2nd battalions of the Foreign Legion, the 2nd battalion of the Algerian tirailleurs, three battalions of the Line, formed by volunteers

from the 23rd, 111th and 143rd regiments, one battalion of marine fusiliers and one of Annamite tirailleurs, with six batteries of artillery. This gives a total of about 6000 men for this brigade.

The 1st brigade, under the immediate command of General Briere de Lalle, consists of three battalions of Turcos, six of *Infanterie de Marine* and one of Tonquinese auxiliaries with a proportion of artillery, engineers, field train, &c., making up a total strength about equal to General Negrier's force. The troops of *Chasseurs d'Afrique* are also attached to this brigade.

It was believed that this division would march along the main road from Hanoi to Bac Ninh, which is defended by at least fourteen fortified positions between the two places, but on my last visit to Hanoi I was told that the brigade would be divided into two columns, one of which would advance from Batang, about seven miles below Hanoi, on the northern bank of the Red River, and one from a point higher up, a little above the embouchure of the *Canal des Rapides*, and that the two columns would form a junction somewhere on the Bac Ninh-Hanoi road. The object of this diversion of the 1st brigade I have not heard explained, and can only conclude that it is planned with the intention to get between Bac Ninh and the Chinese troops occupying the forts on the main road, and so cut off their retreat to the citadel.

No column of men are to start from Haiduong, as at first believed. Haiduong has the advantage, as a base, of being situated nearer the field of operations, with easy navigation up the Thai-binh and Song-cau as far as the junction of the *Canal des Rapides*. This stream has been barricaded at both ends.

The citadel of Bac Ninh, is of hexagonal form, with bastion fronts, each a thousand feet in length. It is surrounded with a moat, which is crossed by four permanent bridges. The town lies close to the citadel on the line of the road to Hanoi. The surrounding country is a swampy plain, dotted about with a few detached hills, the nearest of which, from the side of the Canal, are situated about two miles from the citadel, which lies about three miles from the river and four to five from the *Canal des Rapides*.

Police Intelligence.
(Reform H. E. Wodehouse, Esq.)
Saturday, March 15.

Sau An, servant, who was remained on a charge of stealing eight tins of milk, the property of the Government, was again before the court this morning and was convicted and sentenced to one month's imprisonment with hard labour.

